Verbatim

...de la presse parlée

MARCH 12, 1991

DAYBREAK - 07H46 - 11'20"

CBM MA 940 MONTREAL Canadian Broad. Corp.

CONCORDIA RATIONALIZES ITS ALLOTMENT OF SPACE

JON KALINA (HOST): Concordia University has a space problem. For one thing, it rents more than half its space. Secondly, the University is spread over eighty buildings on two widely-separated campuses, and for various reasons, including government funding, the University has decided to rationalize its space and this will involve moving a lot of departments and people around.

Not everybody is happy about that. Ken Whittingham is Concordia's director of public relations. Harvey Schulman is the principle of Concordia's Liberal Arts College. Good morning to both of you.

KEN WHITTINGHAM (CONCORDIA DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS): Good morning.

HARVEY SCHULMAN (LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE PRINCIPLE): Good morning.

JON KALINA: Mr. Whittingham, let me start with you.

First of all, how many people are you planning to move around?

KEN WHITTINGHAM: We don't know at the moment, and just in listening to the program earlier this morning, the terminology that's been used is that departments have already been notified that they are moving. And that's really the crux of the issue, of the controversy.

What has been produced is a report that tries to outline the framework that will be used in deciding how departments or where departments should be located in the next five to ten years.

And part of that report suggested one scenario that might be used, but that's all it is at the moment, and I guess the problem is that some departments feel that this report is now fixed in stone, that it's a done deal, and the people who wrote the report say, "No, this is a hypothesis about what might be done." So no one yet has received any directives, so no one knows for sure exactly who will be moving where.

JON KALINA: But you do have, I mean, these ideas are stemming from a desire to, to rationalize space and to put departments together, right? So something like that is going to happen?

KEN WHITTINGHAM: Oh yes, there are definitely going to be moves starting in 1992, '93, and '94, and I suppose

the basic thrust of the committee report is that there's a certain logic in grouping types of departments that have similar needs, be they certain similarities in classrooms, or seminar rooms, or labs, or storage space, that sort of thing.

So there would be groupings, departments that tend to interact more with each other should be located in the same general areas. That's the logic behind the report.

JON KALINA: Alright. Mr. Schulman, you're principle of the Liberal Arts College there at Concordia. Mr. Whittingham says nothing is carved in stone. What has upset you about all of this?

HARVEY SCHULMAN: Well, soon after he tells us that nothing is carved in stone, he gives us a scenario is which the principle is pretty well laid out and clear that they envison clusters of departments that they see as interacting properly on one campus, being housed in one or the other of the campus, either Sir George or Loyola.

And the scenario that they produced is a very dramatic one, very different than what anybody has come to expect, which envisioned essentially, and I can put it no other way, the gutting of downtown Humanities and most of the Social Science Department, and this is a radical scenario, and the principles underlying that are, lead us to believe that the flexibility may not be as great as Ken Whittingham indicated

in his initial observations and then seemed to modify as he went along.

JON KALINA: Well, gutting is a pretty strong word. Let's say that the Humanities moves to Loyola. What's so wrong about that?

HARVEY SCHULMAN: Well, what's wrong about it is that there are large viable departments with a student group that would like to stay downtown, with a large number of faculties that have mounted very successful operations, that have maintained a very collegial and integrated relationships with their colleagues in the same department on the other campus, and the principle, which I think all of us would agree, that is enunciated in the report having to do with collegiality and operating, and presenting something in the interests of students and faculty, I think would end up with the adverse effect.

Specifically, whereas collegiality now exists and coordination and rationalization of resources exist in large departments which are present in both campuses, putting one complete unit on the other campus, whatever which way it goes, will tend to, I think, disrupt the collegiality that exists...

JON KALINA: I'm going to stop you there, because let's say in a department like the English Department, if some of it's at Loyola and some of it's downtown and you said they

get along well, why would they get along worse if you put them in the same place?

HARVEY SCHULMAN: Well, the, both do a job which is worthwhile and they serve their students. When two-thirds of, I'm not sure, I think, maybe, I think the overwhelming majority in the faculty are full-time faculty, is present downtown and two-thirds of their enrollment clientele is downtown, if they are now told that they are going to go to Loyola campus, it is not necessarily true that all their students will follow.

And from what I gather, their students at the downtown campus are outraged by this scenario being proposed and many of the faculty feel that by putting themselves at Loyola campus, by the way, many of the faculty live close to Loyola campus, so personally it's no great imposition to be there, but they feel that their program would suffer and they would have a very significant decline in enrollments.

JON KALINA: Well, Mr. Whittingham, if it's not carved in stone, and we have pretty strong objections here, what's going to happen?

KEN WHITTINGHAM: Okay, and if I did mislead Harvey, I apologize. Obviously, the principles, I agree with him, the principles of the report are quite clear. I was simply saying the actual units involved have not been decided.

Where we're going to go from here, I guess the problem

that the committee faced, living in the real world, rental moneys are going to be reduced significantly once we acquire our new downtown library building and once we acquire the Loyola High School on the Loyola campus, so we are going to be left with large, a large infusion of new space which we will own.

And at the same time, the government will be cutting back an equivalent amount in rental money, so we have got to fill those units and moves have to take place.

That's the bottom line and it's unfortunate that some departments will probably not be happy with where they will be moving.

But the question right now I guess is trying to find those logical arguments to make sure that the moves are done as rationally as possibly. I have no problems with a lot of the points that Harvey is raising. They are very legitimate and that's why this report was an interim report, was made public. It's to get input, those sorts of ideas...

JON KALINA: Well, I think it was only made public, wasn't it, if I am correct in my research, it was made public because somebody sort of leaked it?

KEN WHITTINGHAM: No, the initial intention was all along that the report was going to circulated for consultation.

JON KALINA: But you didn't circulate it.

KEN WHITTINGHAM: It wasn't ready yet. It was only printed last week. In other words, if there was no, there had been no consultation intended, people would have simply gotten directives saying "You're going to be moving as of such and such a date in 1992."

It's clearly stated, it is an interim report. And with one scenario in there. The end result, you know, one can make any sorts of hypothesis. We might say that all of Humanities should stay downtown and there should be a clustering of another faculty on the Loyola campus. That's what will be debated in the coming months.

HARVEY SCHULMAN: So one of the problems, Jon, that we encounter, is that faculty did not know this committee existed. Faculty, in terms of its departments, in terms of its council, in terms of its normal constitutional bodies was never apprised that this type of process was underway with a committe chosen which evidently lacks the credibility of, and the support of the overwhelming number of the faculty which I encountered.

And it seems to me that a consultative process that involves the university making major changes because of strategic needs, funding considerations, or structural characteristics of the buildings in which they own would have elicited a great deal of support if faculty had understood what the legalities were and they would have had

a chance to put forward their proposals so that they in fact would have been able to contribute and to participate in a process.

What has happened instead was a scenario has been created by a group that doesn't have the recognition and credibility for the most part of the faculty, and what happened, it came out by virtue of exactly as you described, as out of a leak, where people just, I mean, most of us didn't really believe that the leak was true because for the last couple of years, the new library building has always been conceived of as being able to handle much of the space problems downtown, so that major departments that are presently housed in inadequate facilites, like History and English would have, in fact plans were drawn up that they would in fact be housed in that new library building.

JON KALINA: Let me ask Mr. Whittingham this, you know, I, just to pick up Harvey Schulman's point there, I know you say that you intended eventually to publish this, but I'm wondering why the process wasn't open from the beginning. It seemed to me that when you have a closed process even through the phase that you did it, it's just sort of asking for this sort of criticism.

KEN WHITTINGHAM: I agree. And with the benefit of hindsight, I think the committee or probably more properly the Vice-Rector, to whom the committee is reporting, should

have alerted in some form or fashion, perhaps sent it or just the workings of the committee and announced that the report would have been published by such and such a date and consultations would have been accepted at that point.

I think that probably would have, would have prevented a lot of the suspicion that's currently running rampant on campus.

But the committee felt that to announce early on that we are looking at the question of the two campus operation and simply give us your ideas, would not have served any particular purpose because people would have been planning almost pie in the sky. In other words...

JON KALINA: Well, I don't know, it seems that our entire country is doing this, these days.

KEN WHITTINGHAM: Well, I don't know if we're advancing, using that process. Now, the committee felt it wanted to provide very specific guidelines that could be used, looking at the number of students that will be available, the square footage that will be available, and people could make their suggestions in that context, and that's where we're at right now.

JON KALINA: Alright. Final word to you, Harvey Schulman?

HARVEY SCHULMAN: Well, my final observation to go on just to add another point is that even the report that's

been proposed for us has a significant internal inconsistencies.

And I think I hear them as Ken speaks, having to do with one hand the principle and the general recommendation and on the other hand, a specificity of a scenario which as it is described indicates, leads us to believe that the University feels that we have no choice and that there is a great rush to judgement and rush to a conclusion, which they want to make safe from faculty, because faculty wouldn't have been able to understand the modalities and the intricacies.

And what has happened is we are now supposed to understand the modalities and the intricacies, not having been part of the consultive process, where it seems to be that if we were going to be educated in the terms of these university people who saw, who have expertise, we never had the opportunity, and now it has even compounded the problem.

At the same time, it seems to me that it's not clear. Is this just a principle to discuss for the ensuing months, or is there a rush to judgement that has to be passed in the next month or two, which will really prevent the proper consultative process from taking place.

JON KALINA: Alright, well, we'll follow this story. Thank you both.

HARVEY SCHULMAN: Thank you.

KEN WHITTINGHAM: Thank you, bye bye.

HARVEY SCHULMAN: Bye bye.

JON KALINA: That was Ken Whittingham, who is the director of public relations at Concordia, and Harvey Schulman, who is principle of Concordia's Liberal Arts College. (LP)

03014R251H1113E13CONCORDIA - 30 -